

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Jun 10, 2010

**Washington, DC** - Congressmen Bruce Braley (D-Iowa) and Phil Hare (D-Ill.) sent a letter today to President Barack Obama and Admiral Thad Allen, urging them to fully evaluate the impact of the BP Oil Spill on Mississippi River shipping lanes. As oil continues to drift closer to the Southwest Passage, a critical shipping lane for farmers who rely on barge traffic to ship their crops overseas, Braley and Hare are concerned about the impact a slowdown in Mississippi River traffic could have on prices for farmers, producers and distributors.

“While current reports indicate that the major ports and shipping lanes are unaffected by the oil slick, and that there are precautions in place to remove oil from any affected vessels, past experience has shown that delays in traffic have had a drastic economic impact on regions beyond the Gulf of Mexico,” the letter states. “Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the agricultural industry suffered sharp declines in the prices of commodities as a result of a traffic slowdown. Access to the Mississippi is crucial to many of the businesses in our districts, and is critical to the agricultural industry who depends on barge shipping to get their products to the rest of the world at competitive costs.”

Braley and Hare requested that the Obama Administration perform a full analysis on the potential economic impact that the Gulf oil spill could have on barge traffic along the Mississippi River, and the further effect on commerce and local economies along the Mississippi. Braley and Hare hope that an efficient and thorough study of the impact could help mitigate the cost of the spill for the agricultural industry in Iowa, Illinois and the rest of the Midwest.

[Read the full text of the letter here.](#)

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